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CLASSROOM METHODS AND DEVICES

PROBLEMS IN GEOGRAPHY—A CONTINENT

In the March number of the *Journal* a number of problems based on the scale, direction, and legend of a map were suggested. The aim of the paper was twofold: to test the knowledge of the subject by the ability to make use of the knowledge and to show that it is possible to devise questions which will show processes of thinking rather than of memory. The present paper enlarges the scope of the former one and blazes a way for problems and test questions in the study of a continent—in this case, South America. Only such of the subject-matter is admitted here as will furnish an outline, and it is to be understood that where there appear to be flagrant omissions the material was not relevant to the problems undertaken, although it may be vastly important from another standpoint. There is good training in making generalizations from the outline and topography maps of South America in order to gain a good conception of the value of these controls, and from them some simple problems may be formulated, but for the purposes of this paper these maps together with the wind maps for July and January with isotherms inserted will be taken as the background of the first series of problems.

1. *Rainfall*.—The study of North America and of the wind belts in preparation for South America yields the following summary:

Rain is the resultant of an ascending current of air containing moisture—the mass of ascending air expands and cools mechanically, the moisture condenses and falls. Ascending currents are caused by:

- A. Heated air, which, becoming lighter than the surrounding air, is pushed up, as in: (1) doldrum belt; (2) lows of prevailing westerlies.
- B. A slope intercepting the winds, as on: (3) windward slopes.

Dryness, conversely, is the resultant of a lack of ascending currents and may occur under descending currents or surface winds.

A. Descending currents are caused by gravity: (1) doldrum belt; (2) highs of westerlies; (3) leeward slopes; (4) polar highs.

B. Surface winds are drying and cause dryness when they blow persistently over the land: (5) trade winds over land.

With a proper preparation, questions or tasks are possible which call for no great ability, but which demand thorough knowledge.

Locate a region of heavy rain; a region of light rain. What is the rainfall of southern Chile and why? On an outline map, make a rainfall map of South America—using solid blue for areas of heavy rainfall and leaving the regions of light rainfall uncolored. Areas not falling into the two classes may be considered as having a moderate rainfall and may be colored a light shade of blue.

The comparisons of the pupils' maps with an accurate rainfall map will show how far the reasoning process has been followed, and the errors in the maps will expose the weak points in the teacher's presentation or the pupil's comprehension.

2. *Temperature*.—The climatic controls are latitude, altitude, proximity to the sea, winds—especially direction, and whether or not they blow from land or water—and rainfall. In discussing the temperatures, there has been too much generalization; teachers have been satisfied with "hot," "cold," or "temperate" for answers. The word "temperate" has no virtue except to cover a vast amount of ignorance, and little knowledge of middle-belt climates can be gained unless the *ranges* of temperature between extreme seasons are considered.

Discuss the climate of Para from the standpoint of the five climatic controls. Compare the effect of each control on Para and the pupil's home town and establish the causes of the difference. Compare the temperatures of Para and Quito; of Para and Valparaiso. From the isotherms, state the annual range of temperature at Para and Rio de Janeiro. Account for the differences.

3. *Vegetation*.—As climate is the greatest factor in determining the distribution of plants and density of vegetation, the conditions affecting density and kinds furnish a preparation for another problem. Very roughly, regions of heavy rainfall yield forests;

regions of light rainfall or having periods of drought are treeless, but grasses thrive; regions of moderate but well-distributed rains are generally wooded (open forests) in their natural state, but offer excellent areas for agriculture; regions of little rain have desert plants.

What will be the vegetation at Para? at Iquique? at Quito? Locate grass areas in South America. What are the llanos? the pampas? the campos? Where will trees probably be found on this continent? Construct a map showing density of vegetation.

The emphasis in vegetation is less upon density than upon products of commercial value. Problems under this heading may be approached in two ways: first, given the conditions under which the staple products will grow, find the localities suitable for these in the country, or, secondly, knowing the conditions and locations, determine whether the conditions agree with the statements already made concerning the temperature, rainfall, altitude, and latitude of the areas.

Rice requires 60-80 degrees for ripening, an abundance of moisture, and is generally grown on low, alluvial lands in the tropics.

Sugar cane requires rich, moist soil; must be practically free from frost, even in winter; and thrives best in low places in the vicinity of the sea.

Coffee grows in well-watered mountainous regions, 1,000 to 4,000 feet high, in the tropics.

Wheat requires a mean summer temperature of 57 degrees and plenty of sunlight.

Which of these (and other) products will grow about Para? Rio de Janeiro? Quito? Buenos Aires? From a study of the maps already presented locate on an outline map the parts of South America which fulfil the requirements for rice. Find a rice map of the continent and note where rice is cultivated. Why are not all the areas capable of yielding rice used for rice culture? Do the same thing for the other products of South America.

Accurate vegetation maps showing density of vegetation cover and the distribution of important products should be presented. It is, of course, recognized that maps showing distribution of any staple of commerce are not in themselves sufficient and they should

be supplemented by a graph or statement which shows the amounts of yield in the various localities.

4. *Animals*.—If the semi-arid localities, inasmuch as they are covered with sparse grasses, offer food for cattle, it will be possible to discuss the cattle industry of South America from the standpoint of the controls. Plot upon an outline map the areas which, because of a short seasonal or a slight yearly rainfall, are covered with grass and are thus suitable for grazing. Compare this with an animal map and account for the divergences.

Among the controls which should be presented before proceeding far in the study is the soil map, and this can be interpreted to mean not so much the character of the soil as the special soil products. In general terms, rainfall and topography furnish good criteria for the soil condition, but the distribution of important minerals in South America—the gold, silver, and sodium nitrate especially—is a large factor in the distribution of the people.

5. *Commerce and population*.—Areas of largest commerce are found where the staples of trade occur in greatest quantities and they are generally located near a convenient harbor or station; areas of moderate commerce follow the same law somewhat modified; inaccessible areas are undeveloped and barren areas are unproductive. Considering the presentations up to this point, it will be possible for the pupils to prepare a commerce map, showing the areas indicated above. Here, as in other cases when an accurate commercial map is presented, a number of points will probably have to be considered because of the departures of the pupils' maps from the true one. As commerce is to a great extent influenced by the density or sparsity of population, a map showing density of population could be made by the pupils.

6. *Exports and imports*.—The teaching of the exports and imports of a country from a tabulated list is a deadening process and rarely accomplishes anything. It is evident that a country will export products demanded in the world's commerce of which an excess over home needs is produced, and will import the necessities and conveniences of life which the land does not yield. The exceptions to this rule are relatively few, but prominent enough to call forth a special explanation. In South America, a review

of the chief products which the country possesses in quantities ought to make clear what the exports are; for instance, on the vegetation map wheat and grass lands for grazing were indicated for Argentina. There was a distinct absence of important products such as the United States finds of value, notably coal and iron, by which manufacturing is carried on. If this is true, then it must be evident that manufactured goods will be a need of Argentina; foremost among these are textiles, cotton and woollen cloths, and then come tools, implements, and manufactured foods. Argentina engaging largely in agriculture will undoubtedly need agricultural implements. What does Rio de Janeiro need? What are the exports and imports of Para? Iquique?

A general treatment of South America is frequently followed by a special treatment of specific important areas. On this continent this would include Rio de Janeiro and coffee, Buenos Aires and wheat and cattle, Iquique and sodium nitrate, and Para and rubber; or, as is at times the custom, the leading states, Brazil, Argentina, and Chile, are studied in more detail. In any case, the work is a review of generalizations, together with a few points of more definite knowledge. In the case of Chile the maps of position, topography, winds, rain, soil, commerce, and population of the continent tell the story and little more is needed except now and then a clearer picture of a few regions, which may fall into the category of type-studies. It is difficult at first for pupils to appreciate that the needs of the home locality are not the needs of all peoples under diverse conditions of life; that meat, an essential part of diet in parts of the United States, has no great place in the life of the people of Para, but considerable training should be given along this line. Questions and problems on the work may be from actual cases or may be hypothetical.

Draw the following areas: a map of a locality, 300 miles from coast to mountains, in the trade winds, which will be a desert; a map of a region with uniform temperature, indicating its climatic and topographic conditions and enough data to explain the climate; a map of a locality producing rice, wheat, and cattle, and possessing a harbor which has to be protected by artificial means from the winds; an area having a gold-export trade, but importing

foods, textiles, and implements; a sketch map of Peru (exporting metals, sugar, and cotton and importing bread stuffs, hardware, and cotton cloth) showing the basis of her trade; a map showing the reason of the lack of rainfall about Lake Titicaca; a map of Chile which will explain her three types of climates, and at the same time will illustrate the industries of northern, central, and southern Chile.

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PLANS FOR TEACHING A STORY TO SMALL CHILDREN

The place of literature in the elementary school is too well assured to admit of any argumentation; its function is too well established to require explanation. It is a fact, however, that even the most enthusiastic teacher occasionally wonders why she secures responses from so few of her pupils.

Aside from the fact that some children are more motor than others, it is just as true that some are more matured, or are naturally brighter than others, and the teacher in her exercises in story-telling makes her appeal directly to the favored few. The less fortunate children are required to do or say too much for their powers and consequently become hopelessly muddled in thinking and in expression. Should the teacher have a great aim in presenting the story, and then upon each repetition have a subordinate aim, she would be more successful in her results. By this means the children are led to picture the situations vividly, to think the process in orderly fashion, to express it clearly, and to live and love the story because of its being their very own.

The well-known story of "The Three Billy Goats Gruff" by Dasent is taken to illustrate the points made. The lessons do not have to be given upon successive days.

FIRST LESSON

Teacher's aim: So to tell the story that the children's attention will be gripped, their imagination quickened, and interest sustained to the end.

Method: How many of you have ever seen a billy goat? How many of you have one at home? What can yours do? [Free expression.] Do you think he is very bright? I know a story about three Billy Goats, and they were very interesting. Would you like to hear the story? Listen while I tell it. [Teacher tells the story with dramatic effect and without comment.] What do you think of these goats? [Free expression.] See if you can tell the story to your mothers when you go home.

SECOND LESSON

Teacher's aim: To clear up obscure points in the minds of the children and to assist them in getting a more definite idea of the story.

Method: You remember the story we had the other day about the Three Billy Goats. What were these Billy Goats named? Where did they go? Who tried to keep them from going? Some of you have seen billy goats, but some of you have not. I am sorry that I cannot show you a live one. I haven't any, but here are some pictures of billy goats. [Teacher shows several pictures.]

Would you like to hear the story again? I shall tell it if you help me. [Teacher tells, assisted by children; e.g.:]

(Teacher) Once upon a time there were—

(Children) three Billy Goats, etc.

(Teacher) Under the bridge there lived—

(Children) a great Troll.

(Teacher) What is a bridge? Where is one near here? This is the picture of a bridge—another picture. I am sure you never saw a Troll; they do not live now. We can only think how they looked. This Troll had eyes—

(Children) as large as saucers;

(Teacher) and a nose—

(Children) as long as your arm.

Shut your eyes and think of a Troll that looked like that. Think of him as under the bridge. I am sure we should be afraid to cross that bridge, but these little goats were not afraid. Help me to tell what Little Gruff did; Middle Gruff [etc., until the entire story has been told by teacher and children].

THIRD LESSON

Teacher's aim: To induce the children to think through the story, putting incidents in their chronological order.

Method: We know the story of the Three Billy Goats so well that today we shall try to tell it and not leave out anything. How does the story begin? [Once upon a time there were three Billy Goats.] Where were the Billy Goats? Where did they want to go? What was the trouble they would have in getting there? Which Billy Goat went first? Tell what the Troll said to him, and what he said to the Troll. Tell about the next Billy Goat. What comes next in the story? Tell about it. What are the Billy Goats doing when the story ends?

FOURTH LESSON

Teacher's aim: To lead the children to dramatize the story.

Method: We shall play one of our little stories today. Which one do you want? [This story will be selected at some time. The teacher can afford to let it wait until the children want to play it.] I am sure that we know the story of the Billy Goats Gruff well enough to play it today. What must we have? [Children will probably name the Three Billy Goats and the Troll.] We shall need something else besides animals. [Children will probably mention bridge, hill, and lowland.] Where shall we have the hill? What can we have for the bridge? Where shall be the plain where the Billy Goats were first eating? [Children arrange details. The actors may be selected (a) by teacher, (b) by a leader, or (c) may be volunteers. Several sets of children may play the parts before the period ends.]

Remember where the Goats are at first, where they are to go, and exactly what they are to say. Take places, etc.

FIFTH LESSON

Teacher's aim: To lead the children to tell the story with attention to order of events, in good language, and with vivid interest.

Method: I wonder if we can tell the story of the Billy Goats Gruff today. Tell of the three Goats, what they were doing, and what they thought they would like to do, John.

Tell of the trouble they would have in getting to the mountain and what Little Gruff did, Mary.

Tell what Middle Gruff did, Edward.

Tell what Big Gruff did, and how the story ends, Anna.

Tell the whole story, Edith.

SIXTH LESSON

Teacher's aim: To allow the class to give free expression to the story.

Method: What story do you want today? Shall we tell it or play it? [Volunteers to tell or play. Children arrange all details, etc.]

SUGGESTIONS

1. Tell some stories to the children without expecting any response from them other than the light upon their faces.
2. Often let the children volunteer to tell stories.
3. Often let them select the stories to tell or to be told.
4. Let the story-teller face the audience and try to interest them.
5. The audience should be free to clap or to show approval in any way if the story is pleasing to them.
6. The audience should be encouraged to ask questions at the close of a story.
7. The teacher in her favorable comment may take occasion to call attention to something which she is emphasizing with the class; e.g., "We enjoyed Ben's story. He spoke so clearly."
8. The teacher should draw the class as closely around her as possible.
9. A good story will stand many repetitions.
10. An uninteresting story should not be repeated.
11. Never forget that literature should give joy, joy, joy.

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